

City of Belmont
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING SEPTEMBER 7, 2011
MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of September 7, 2011 was called to order at 7:04 p.m. at the Belmont City Hall Council Chambers.

I. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair (CC) Cheechov, Vice Chair Davis, Youth Commissioners (YC) Zakeri, Commissioner (C) King, Sullivan, Bortoli, and YC Bartee. C Wright arrived at 7:22 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Andrews

STAFF PRESENT: Parks and Recreation Director (PRD) Gervais, Interim City Attorney (ICM) Kane, and Secretary (S) Saggau

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

C King moved, seconded by C Sullivan, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 3, 2011. Vote 7-0 in favor.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Patricia Braunstein spoke in support of renovating Barrett Community Center. She noted Barrett is a wonderful resource and has the potential to be an incredible facility for Belmont. She acknowledged there are economic restraints but would like to know if there is anything a citizen could do. PRD Gervais noted that this could be put on the Commission's agenda or Ms. Braunstein could provide her contact information if Commissioners would like to discuss further with her.

Responding to C Cheechov's inquiry for a meeting at Davey Glen Park, PRD Gervais noted the Commission was given a copy of the proposed display sign at Davey Glen Park and requested their comments. Meetings at the site would be planned after the sign is posted at the park. PRD Gervais said this topic would be brought back to the Commission to discuss some meeting ideas.

PRD Gervais announced that the Save the Music Festival would be on Sunday, October 2, 2011 at Twin Pines Park.

PRD Gervais noted that Koret Field would be on the September 13, 2011 City Council agenda.

C Sullivan stated that trail work continues and dates are posted on the web site and patch.

IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

V. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. A Guide to the Brown Act

PRD Gervais noted that the Brown Act is a challenging law for Commissioners to follow as it is confusing. Interim City Attorney (ICA) Kathleen Kane was in attendance to provide some information on the act and answer questions from the Commission. PRD Gervais noted there is a publication "A Guide to the Brown Act" which can be purchased if any Commissioners would like a copy.

ICA Kane explained the purpose of the Brown Act is to avoid the situation of closed door deals. In concept it is a good idea but has become more complicated due to the legislature's involvement. She said the main concern about the Brown Act is making sure that meetings with a majority of members are noticed with items posted on an agenda and held in public so that discussions are accessible to the public. She noted there could be a problem if serial meetings occur where members discuss topics and convey information to each other.

ICA Kane said that there are also Conflict of Interest rules which include the 500' rule. The primary issue is financial to avoid self dealing. She noted Youth Commissioners would have fewer conflicts with this because they do not have the same financial stakes as adult Commissioners usually have. She noted because of the items the Parks & Recreation Commission works on there it is less likely there would be a conflict of interest. ICM Kane added if Commissioners have any questions they should check with the City Attorney.

C Wright arrived at 7:22 p.m.

ICA Kane responded to Commission questions:

- If items are not on the agenda they cannot be discussed substantively; items can be brought up to pass on information but if it looks like it is going to be a substantive discussion it should be put on a future agenda.
- If any action is taken it must be on the agenda.
- One Commissioner could talk to another Commissioner as long as they do not convey information from any other Commissioners. It was recommended that

Commissioners disclose to the other Commissioner if they spoke to another Commissioner without sharing what the other said.

- The FPPC (Fair Political Practices Commission) has generated a set of implementing regulations. It created a 500' rule if one owns or has an interest in a piece of property with a worth greater than \$2,000 they must exclude themselves. Members have the option to recuse themselves for prudential reasons if they think people might believe they are not unbiased. When recusing themselves for personal reasons it is not required to disclose why but if it is for a financial conflict reason that should be stated.
- Commissioners that are advocates for certain issues do not need to recuse themselves from these issues unless there are financial interest concerns.
- When a consensus of Commissioners attends fact finding gatherings a meeting must be noticed. In the situation of a conference Commissioners could break up their attendance so there is not a majority going.
- Staff can assist the Commission by answering questions from a Commissioner and share the response with the entire Commission without stating which Commissioner raised the questions.
- Commissioners should be clear when they are stating their personal opinion and not representing the entire Commission.
- Texting and emailing at meetings is a new concern and normally governed by protocol. It can be a Brown Act violation if it is substantively amounts to a serial meeting or an unagendized conversation. She cautioned this would become a public record if this is done from the dais.
- Commissioners should use their city email for city business so that their personal email does not become public record.

PRD Gervais noted the question raised if YC Zakeri should recuse herself from discussion on Davey Glen Park was discussed with the City Attorney and because YC Zakeri does not have an economic interest in the property she lives in she does not have a conflict. ICA Kane explained that the reason one must recuse themselves is if they own \$2,000 worth of economic interest in real estate within 500' of a property. The definition includes spouse or dependent children who own property but does not anticipate for youth members of a body.

In response to C Wright's questions ICM Kane and PRD Gervais advised the Commission on how to respond to reporters and how to prepare themselves for what they want to say to the press.

The Commission thanked ICM Kane for providing information on the Brown Act.

ICM Kane stated she enjoyed working for the City and meeting the Commissioners and thanked them for the opportunity to be there.

b. Parks and Recreation Survey Results

PRD Gervais stated the Parks & Recreation Department sent out a survey to customers and he reviewed the highlights from the results:

- Highest response came from females, 73%, with the majority in the 35-44 age group
- Many customers expressed opposition to the convenience fees charged with on-line registration.
- Responses did not show much support for synthetic turf athletic fields.
- Barrett Community Center is important to these customers.
- There was a lot of support for a community pool in Belmont.
- Many residents have used the open space and trails.

YC Zakeri commented that she agrees a community pool would benefit the youths in Belmont.

C Wright noted there was some interest in having a Bridge class and asked if it is offered. PRD Gervais said that there are Bridge classes available in the Senior Center. He added staff is working on getting the word out about the Senior Center and increasing its use and making improvements to it.

C Wright said she noticed people would like more weekend and evening classes and PRD Gervais explained staff has tried to increase those but it can be difficult because of the instructors' schedules. There are early morning boot camp classes available and yoga and tai chi are offered in the morning. PRD Gervais acknowledged that Adult Fitness was highly rated as a need.

C Wright questioned if the Twin Pines Senior & Community Center should have "senior" in its title as it may give some the sense that they cannot use the Center if they are not a senior. PRD Gervais noted there has been some talk if using the term senior is current and there may be discussions on changing the wording.

C Davis stated he was surprised at the number of people wanting a swimming pool at Barrett and noted they preferred a fitness pool; not a competition pool. He agreed that it appears people would like different class times. He suggested that surveys be given to participants at the end of the class to get more input.

C Sullivan noted it appears that there are a high number of mothers with young children responding to the survey. He noted a lot of people in the Belmont want a pool. He said he believes there is a lot of misinformation on synthetic turf and noted the importance of getting information to the community. He added there is a lot of interest in Barrett and despite tough financial times it may be time to start talking about it.

C Bortoli said he was also surprised at the support for a pool but noted the audience may not be a cross-section of the City but representative of mother's of school-aged kids. He noted there is an asphalt path at the Sport Complex around the field but some people may run the inside of it on the turf. He noted there may not enough space to layout a track there but runners could still run around the field.

PRD Gervais noted last year's survey which covered parks was included in the packet. It did show support for a tax increase to support open space and a new community Center; this year the percentage of support decreased.

c. Paper Trail Sign Markers

PRD Gervais stated he has found this project is more difficult that originally thought because of residents' opposition to having paper trails being built next to their homes. He noted one thing that could be done now is to sign some of the existing trails. He recommended the trail that connects Twin Pines Park to O'Neill Street could be the first one marked. This would introduce the idea to residents to see if there is interest in expanding this system.

PRD Gervais noted four examples of a proposed design for the pathway markers were included in Attachment A of the staff report. He requested the Commission provide input for their preferred design.

Responding to Commission questions PRD Gervais explained the following:

- Sign motif would remain the same throughout the system
- Signs would each be numbered at entrance points – each side of the path has a different number
- Not all pathways would be connecting
- Pathways would be numbered in the order that signs are installed

Following discussion on the sign's wording the Commission came to the following consensus:

- Include the City logo and remove City of Belmont
- Wording to state "Pathway to (destination)"
- Marker # to be included following destination
- In small font at bottom include "Belmont Pathway System"

The Commission discussed the shape and color of the sign. The Commission approved of the proposed shape of the sign presented. Commissioners provided input on color suggestions for the sign. It was decided that PRD Gervais would prepare some options incorporating the color scheme ideas and would send to the Commission by email for their final thoughts.

VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Questions and Comments

PRD Gervais reported the following:

The City will apply for a couple grants; one for a Tree Inventory and another for Fire Safe Crews and other trail maintenance.

Staff has met with the School District discussing their expansion plans and how this will impact field space. The main concern is that the fields are not left in bad shape after the construction project.

The Tree Ordinance has passed and will go into effect on September 23, 2011. A pamphlet is being prepared to inform residents and tree companies will be notified of the new ordinance. The Parks & Recreation Commission will need to assign two members to serve on the Tree Board which will be done with Ad-Hoc Committee assignments in 2012.

Commissioners received copies of the proposed signage for Davey Glen Park. PRD Gervais requested that final comments be given to him by Friday, September 9. C Sullivan suggested reoriented the sign to match the layout of the park site.

PRD Gervais distributed copies of the schedule for the North Field Project at the Belmont Sports Complex.

Staff is still talking with San Mateo and Foster City for an agreement for Adult Softball.

Discussions continue with Crystal Springs Upland School that is proposing to build a new school at the Davis Drive site. There have been discussions on the possibility of using their fields on weekends.

Movie Night in the Park was successful. The movie shown was Horton Hears a Who.

The Bike Bridge Project opening date has not been set yet. There have been some problems with graffiti on the new bridge.

CC Cheechov noted AYSO would have their Opening Day on Saturday, September 10 at 9 am at the Belmont Sports Complex.

B. Future Agenda Items

Davey Glen

Barrett Community Center – YC Zakeri suggested having a volunteer cleanup

YC Zakeri suggested using Survey Monkey for surveying youths. She would also like a Facebook Page because that is a good way to get information out to youths.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

Jonathan Gervais
Parks & Recreation Director